



# State Flower: Saguaro Cactus Blossom



SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Cereus giganteus*

DESCRIPTION: Creamy white flowers with yellow centers. About 3 inches in diameter. Found on the ends of saguaro cacti arms. Emit a smell similar to an overripe melon. Can reach heights of more than 50 feet and live more than 200 years. Very slow growth. Often found under a nurse plant, like palo verde.

RANGE: Almost exclusively found in the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona and western Sonora. Can be found from sea level up to 4,000 feet.

HABITAT: Sonoran Desert, particularly Arizona Upland regions. Typically found on the south-facing sides of slopes.

REPRODUCTION: Bloom in May and June. Bloom at night and into the early part of the day. Survive only about 18 hours. Pollinated primarily by nocturnal animals like bats and moths. By July, the red-fleshed fruit is ripe. Will release thousands of tiny black seeds that will germinate about five days after a rain.

STATUS: Not endangered, but protected in Arizona.

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. *A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert*. Tucson: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press, 2000.

SHG Resources. Arizona State Flower: Saguaro Cactus Blossom. 22 April 2005. <<http://www.shgresources.com/az/symbols/flower/>>

Photo: G. Andrejko